



Department of Justice

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TWO ARRESTED FOR ROLES IN MARRIAGE SCAM

CINCINNATI- Agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement today arrested Bozhidar Bakalov, age 38, and Stacy Harbstreit, age 23, both of Cincinnati on charges contained in a federal complaint filed in U.S. District Court here and unsealed today.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced the arrests that occurred this morning.

Bakalov, also known as Steven R. Campbell, is charged with conspiracy to commit marriage fraud, punishable by up to five years imprisonment, and one count of aggravated identity theft, punishable by a mandatory two-year prison term consecutive to any other sentence. Harbstreit is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit marriage fraud.

According to an affidavit filed with the complaint, Bakalov, who is a naturalized U.S. citizen, operates a fraudulent marriage scheme between U.S. citizens and Eastern European aliens. Bakalov, with the assistance of Harbstreit, allegedly recruited women in the Cincinnati area to marry men from these countries in exchange for cash. The marriages were allegedly arranged to allow the men to fraudulently obtain Permanent Resident Cards.

Initial appearances for both were held before a U.S. Magistrate Judge today. A detention hearing is set for this Thursday.

Lockhart commended the investigation by ICE agents, and Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Richard Chema, who is prosecuting the case.

Charges filed in a criminal complaint are merely accusations. The defendants should be presumed innocent until and unless the government proves guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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